

# Open Textbooks in South African Higher Education

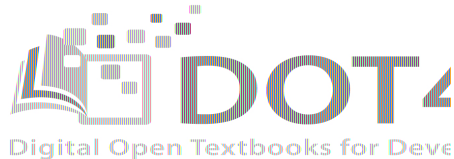
Hosted by Glenda Cox, Michelle Willmers & Bianca Masuku

Digital Open Textbooks for Development project, Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching,  
University of Cape Town

7 July 2021



Centre for  
Innovation in  
Learning and  
Teaching



# Welcome and introduction

**Dr Glenda Cox**

**DOT4D Principal Investigator**

# The Digital Open Textbooks for Development project

Three-year (2018-2021) research, advocacy and implementation initiative, following in wake of Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) and other CILT open education initiatives (since 2007).

Open education projects in CILT funded by the IDRC, Andrew W Mellon Foundation, Carnegie Foundation and Shuttleworth Foundation.



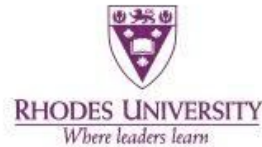
**Dr Glenda Cox**  
Principal Investigator



**Bianca Masuku**  
Researcher



**Michelle Willmers**  
Publishing &  
Implementation  
Manager



higher education  
& training  
Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



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STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY



Open Education  
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1918 - 2018



**STEAM**  
FOUNDATION NPC



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WESTERN CAPE



## ***UCT Open Content / OpenUCT***

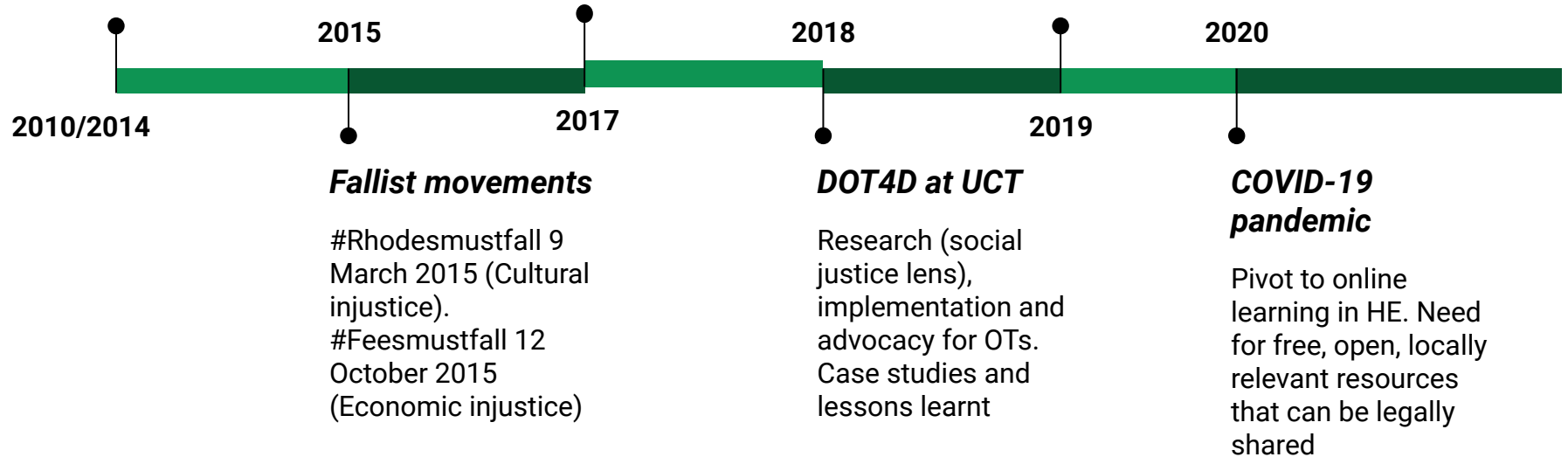
Open Content OER repository  
(predecessor of 2014 OpenUCT repository for research and teaching materials)

## ***DHET Open Learning Policy Framework***

Outlines principles of open learning and recommends OER use

## ***UNESCO OER Recommendation***

Set of 5 recommendations to support OER creation and use globally



# OBJECTIVES

Raise awareness of open textbooks as a strategy for addressing financial cost burden, curriculum transformation and decolonisation, and the performance gap in South African higher education institutions.

Articulate mechanisms that can be employed across institutions to support open textbook development.

Identify a community of practice in the South African HE sector that can collaborate on supporting open textbook production across South African HEIs.

# PROGRAMME

1. Welcome and introduction	Dr Glenda Cox
2. Summary of DOT4D research findings	Bianca Masuku
3. DOT4D implementation overview	Michelle Willmers
4. Input 1: Open textbooks and mathematics for South African school-leavers	Dr Jonathan Shock
5. Input 2: Mechanisms for institutional open textbook support	Assoc. Prof. Lis Lange
6. Discussion 1: Mechanisms for institutional open textbook support	Roundtable
7. Discussion 2: How to collaborate going forward?	Roundtable
8. Way forward and closing comments	Roundtable

# Summary of DOT4D research findings

**Bianca Masuku**  
DOT4D Researcher





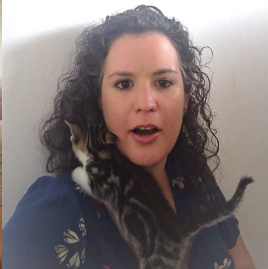
# UCT open textbook authors in the DOT4D study



[Kensleyrao Apajee](#)  
**Mechanical Engineering**



[Chris Barnett & Cesarina Edmonds-Smith](#)  
**Chemistry**



[Stella Papanicolaou](#)  
**Architecture**



[Dr Juan Klopper](#)  
**Surgery**



[A/Prof. Abimbola Windapo](#)  
**Construction**



[A/Prof Maria Keet](#),  
**Computer Science**



[Jonathan Shock](#),  
**Mathematics**



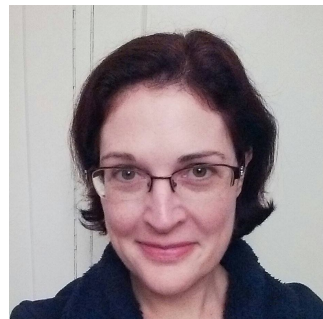
[Dr James Lappeman](#),  
**Marketing**



[Tim Low](#),  
**Statistics**

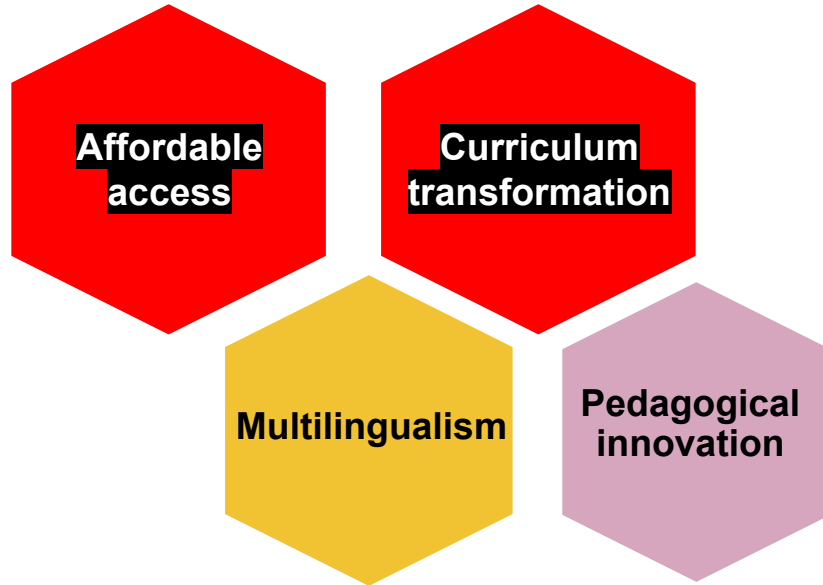


[Dr Michael Held](#),  
**Orthopaedic Surgery**



[Dr Claire Blackman](#)  
**Mathematics**

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: DRIVERS AND IMPERATIVES



## **ADDRESSING INJUSTICE: ECONOMIC MALDISTRIBUTION (Fraser, 2005)**

- Academics at UCT are aware of the challenges related to the cost and utility of traditional textbooks and are experimenting with new approaches towards resource creation through open practice.
- Open textbooks have the potential to disrupt histories of exclusion in South African HE institutions by addressing issues of cost and marginalisation through the creation of affordable, contextually-relevant learning resources and promote a more socially just approach to materials creation and provision in the South African HE system.

## ADDRESSING INJUSTICE: CULTURAL MISRECOGNITION

- Open textbook authors are attempting to make content more accessible in terms of relevance, language, format and genre in order to promote greater inclusivity.
- Strategies that authors employed in their pedagogical approaches informed their perceptions of the possible cultural affordances of their open textbooks. These perceived affordances included the ability of the open textbook to serve as a platform or mechanism through which to address cultural issues of relevance and incorporate multiple voices.

## ADDRESSING INJUSTICE: POLITICAL MISREPRESENTATION

- Academics at UCT acknowledge that there is a legacy of gatekeeping in the selection of prescribed textbooks which serves to perpetuate political misframing and exclusion.
- As such, they are including students in content development processes in order to shift power dynamics and build confidence in terms of students' ability to contribute.
- Strategies that the authors employed politically challenge the status quo, shift power dynamics, and counter existing publishing models.

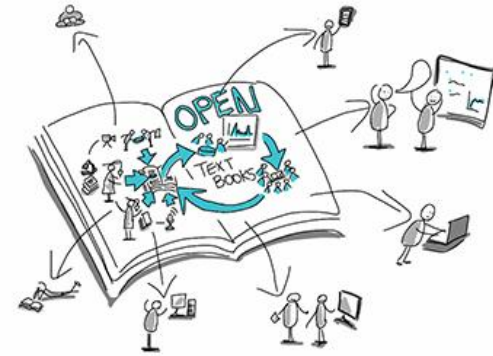
# DOT4D implementation overview

**Michelle Willmers**

**DOT4D Publishing & Implementation Manager**



**Open textbooks are digital, free to use and openly licensed teaching materials.**



## Open textbook definition

Open textbooks are digital, free to use and openly licensed collections of course-related teaching and learning content published on platforms and in formats that provide affordances for the integration of multimedia and ancillary practice or assessment components.

These locally published textbooks present opportunities for inclusive, collaborative authorship strategies. The open licensing aspect also means that these resources can be legally shared and redistributed, both within and beyond the institution.

# A VIEW FROM THE PUBLISHING TRENCHES

Range of authorship, content development, quality assurance and publishing models (generally collaborative), often influenced by discipline.

Range in degree of technological sophistication in content delivery, but growing demand for and expectation of dynamic, interactive publishing platform(s).

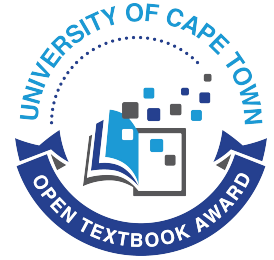
Challenge of where to publish/host content.

New roles and responsibilities managing editorial and publishing processes (academic and service provider partners).

Challenge of time and resourcing (compounded by protracted cycles of time and challenge of alignment with semester cycles).



# MECHANISMS FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT



- Small to medium-sized grants programmes to facilitate open textbook development and publishing.
- Recognition of open textbook development efforts for promotion and other forms of institutional reward.
- Acknowledgement of the time commitment and protracted time cycles involved in open textbook production (with concomitant relief from other academic duties).

## RECOMMENDATION:

# Maximise efficiencies and address sustainability as SA HE sector

Evidence of increasing demand for open textbook development support as academics change and improve the way they teach online.

**“I can’t do my job with the traditional textbook”**

Localisation and context are important in decolonial/curriculum transformation agenda, but we think there can be synergies and efficiencies to be gained by addressing open textbook production as a sector.

Suggest focusing institutional resources where need is most explicit in terms of:

- Courses impeding graduation
- Curriculum transformation and language translation

*Any questions?*

# Open textbooks and mathematics for South African school-leavers

**Dr Jonathan Shock**

**Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics,  
University of Cape Town**

# Mechanisms for institutional open textbook support

**Assoc. Prof. Lis Lange**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning,  
University of Cape Town**

# **Roundtable discussion 1:**

## **Mechanisms for institutional open textbook support**

## Jamboard link:

[https://jamboard.google.com/d/1YMgRDY7\\_TMvDBj7euYT5YJkLhox3ChKCchDejm08tRo/edit?usp=sharing](https://jamboard.google.com/d/1YMgRDY7_TMvDBj7euYT5YJkLhox3ChKCchDejm08tRo/edit?usp=sharing)

# **Roundtable discussion 2:**

## **How to collaborate going forward and where to focus efforts?**



# The way forward and closing comments

## WHAT CAN DOT4D OFFER?

- Facilitate two follow-up sessions before the end of 2021.
  - Coordinate activities of a working group of volunteer participants from this group (and other colleagues) until the end of 2021. (Add contact details to participant list)
  - Provide report on roundtable proceedings.
- > Ongoing: Production of open textbook development guide

## Participant mailing list:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13eD7HRqwDRj\\_4uTO-WdEPQEpNWqHnmoofD\\_TwgeLaDw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13eD7HRqwDRj_4uTO-WdEPQEpNWqHnmoofD_TwgeLaDw/edit?usp=sharing)

## Related documents

Cox, G., Masuku, B. & Willmers, M. 2020. Open Textbooks and Social Justice: Open Educational Practices to Address Economic, Cultural and Political Injustice at the University of Cape Town. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1 (2):pp. 1–10. Available at: <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/31887>

Cox, G., Masuku, B. & Willmers, M. (in press). Open Textbooks, Intuitive Pedagogy and Social Justice.

Cox, G., Masuku, B. & Willmers, M. (in press). Internal Conversations and Cycles of Time: Open Textbook Author Journeys at the University of Cape Town.

DOT4D. 2021. Open Textbooks in South African Higher Education: Action Brief. Cape Town: Digital Open Textbooks for Development. Available at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_BFNLHPRcPP1f94GyR9EiZ98HKKu54f1/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_BFNLHPRcPP1f94GyR9EiZ98HKKu54f1/view?usp=sharing)

## WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED TO DO?

- A review of intellectual property policies to alleviate IP constraints to staff and students at South African HEIs wanting to undertake open textbook production.
- An audit of local, institutionally supported IT infrastructure available to facilitate textbook creation, publishing and curation across a wide range of formats and disciplines.

Link to meeting recording

[https://protect-za.mimecast.com/s/d\\_zacAnX51ixXJG0hG-HSt](https://protect-za.mimecast.com/s/d_zacAnX51ixXJG0hG-HSt)